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ABSTRACT

Information concerning teachers' attitudes toward community education was gathered from a group of teachers who had completed community education courses and was compared to information gathered from a group of teachers who had never taken such courses. The two groups were divided into three age classifications, three teaching experience levels, and according to whether or not a community education program existed at their school. A questionnaire of 26 statements soliciting a response indicating level of agreement or disagreement with the statement was administered to all members of both groups. Analysis of the data revealed that: (1) teachers who have had community education courses support the community education concept more favorably than teachers who have not; (2) as a group, younger teachers are less favorable than teachers over 36 years of age; (3) teachers with four to ten years of teaching experience were less favorable than those with more than ten years; and (4) teachers whose schools had no community education programs were less favorable than those whose schools had such programs. The questionnaire used in the investigation is appended. (MM)

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AN INVESTIGATION OF TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS COMMUNITY EDUCATION CONCEPTS

by

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As people live longer and enjoy more leisure time, the need for lifelong education has become more and more obvious. New concepts of education have begun taking shape and citizens as well as educators have been looking for new educational processes which will satisfy unmet needs. According to Melby (1964:17) one movement that has gained momentum over the past thirty years and shows promise of fulfilling more of the educational objectives than others is that of community education.

The community education concept had been implemented in a few school districts in Arizona by the late sixties. The concept met with varying degrees of success. However, the expansion has not been as great as in certain other states. Among other things, this situation suggests a need to clarify the concepts of community education for educators, policy-makers, and citizens.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

Although the community education concept has been favorably accepted in some states, the acceptance has been less than spectacular in Arizona. Since 1968, graduate level courses in community education have been offered to interested students through the Southwest Regional Center for Community Education Development at Arizona State University. Have these courses been valuable? More specifically, do the attitudes toward community education concepts differ between teachers who have completed community education courses and

and those who have not?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to collect information from teachers who have taken community education courses and compare their attitude toward the concepts of community education with teachers who have never had such courses.

The hypothesis for this study states that teachers who have completed community education courses will possess a more favorable attitude toward community education concepts than those who have not.

Assumptions

Two basic assumptions were made in developing this study.

1. The samples of the groups were representative of all teacher groups.

2. Those person responding to this questionnaire would do so personally and conscientiously.

Limitation of the Study

1. No attempt was made to determine the basis for the attitudes of the groups involved in this study.

2. Teachers in the group not having completed community education courses were selected on the basis of their availability.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are applicable to this study.

Attitude. A manner of acting, thinking, or feeling, that shows one's disposition toward a particular subject: a generalized viewpoint of approval or disapproval.

Community Education. A philosophical concept which serves the entire community by providing for all of the educational needs of all of its community members. It uses

the local school to serve as the catalyst for bringing community resources to bear on community problems in an effort to develop a positive sense of community, improve community living, and develop the community process toward the end of self-actualization. (Minzey, 1972:58)

Community Education Course. A graduate level course offered by Arizona State University either on campus or through the Extension Program. The subject matter of the course may either be: Administration of the Community School (EDA 538), Programming and Financing of Community Education (EDA 549), or Problems and Issues in the Administration of Community Education (EDA 658).

Concept. A generalized idea or class of thoughts concerning the totality of the community education concept.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

To many the concept of community education represents a vital, effective approach to complex problems facing schools and society today. Over-specialization and compartmentalization of twentieth century life may lead to a society divided against itself and disaster for schools as well. The separation of school and community has engendered mistrust, lack of understanding, and hence decreasing support on the part of citizens not directly involved in the schools. This lack of support manifests itself in very concrete ways, such as defeated school budgets.

Many educators see community education as one viable means of dispelling this mistrust and replacing it with confidence in the educational system. Community education can potentially enrich the lives of everyone because it strives to involve all community members in the educational process (not merely K through 12 children). It potentially can receive broader support than the schools currently enjoy, because it uses community resources for the benefit of everyone.

The successful implementation of community education depends on the entire school staff, but this study was concerned only with the classroom teacher. Teachers function at the center of the educational process and are thus more aware of the needs of their students and through their students, can be more aware of the needs of the parents than almost anyone else in the community.

The literature on community education has not dealt in depth with the concerns and views of teachers regarding

community education, partly because community education was not widespread until fairly recently. The first gradute study program in community education was established in 1955 at Eastern Michigan University by the Charles S. Mott Foundation. The second program was not established until 1964. Today seventeen regional university centers operate across the United States. (Seay, 1974: 352) Consequently, research in community education has only been conducted during the past ten years.

Although approximately 4,000 community schools exist nationwide, teachers have been incorporated into the intial planning of these programs in very few instances. (Oregon, 1975: 2) This is due in part to the teachers' lack of information as to the concept of community education and the school's role in its implementation. Since the attitudes teachers hold toward community education are of such importance to the community education movement and since the regional university centers are charged with the education of students regarding these concepts, the related literature will be divided into two parts: 1. Attitude Changes 2. Attitudes concerning Community Education.

ATTITUDE CHANGES

Inasmuch as the purpose of this study was to determine if teachers who have taken community education courses had a more favorable attitude toward community education concepts than teachers who have not, research concerning specific courses or training programs on the attitudes of teachers was examined. Gibson (1972: 213) indicated that teachers who were prepared at one college of education in London became more open in their role orientation as primary and secondary teachers. They also gained greater flexibility in their understanding of the nature of social organization.

This was in contrast to a control group of non-education students. In a similar study the type of teacher educational institution attended by elementary teachers significanly related to their ability to maintain harmonious relationships with their students. (Kearney, 1956: 708) Those educated in universities as opposed to a teacher's college or liberal arts college scored the highest.

Homuth and Deutschen (1969: 569) conducted a study to determine if attitudes differ between 1. students at the beginning of a course entitled "Principles of Secondary Education" and their attitudes at the end of the course; 2. students at the beginning of the course and veteran teachers; and 3. students at the completion of the course and veteran teachers. Each of the three variate groupings responded to five criteria variables: pupil characteristics, teacher methods, professional activities, teacher characteristics, and pupil-teacher relationships. Significant differences were found in the first two groups therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. However only two of the criteria variables were rejected by the third group leaving the categories of teacher methods, pupil characteristics, and teacher characteristics to be explained. The findings were conclusive and a generalization can be made that the course precipitated a change in the students' attitudes.

Johnson (1972: 17) found that teachers who were trained in a child-oriented curriculum will have a more favorable attitude toward teaching than those trained to believe that subject matter was most important.

Two studies dealing with faculty readiness for innovation were examined. Hill (1972: 38) found that social science and public services professors were the most receptive to innovative practices as were younger faculty members. In another study Bohn, Butts, and Raun found teachers at the higher grade levels with more years of teaching experience

were more successful in the implementation of an innovative science curriculum.

Factors responsible for attitudinal change were studied by Goodrich (1976: 5) who found that rural Massachusetts School Board members changed their opinion on school-related topics an average of twenty-two percent after they became aware of community opinions on the same topics. Also teachers can increase their effectiveness in influencing organizational change through a greater awareness of their role in the de decision-making process according to Hummel (1970: 15). Teachers receiving training in the creation and implementation of organizational change showed a marked improvement in morale in contrast to those who received no such training.

ATTITUDES CONCERNING COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community education did not begin as a fully developed concept. The idea evolved over several years and has recently emerged as a philosophy of education according to Minzey (1974: 7). During its developmental stages, community education was at various times synonymous with extra activities for children, adult education, recreation programs, and programs for the poor. To best describe the current status of community education, one must understand the dramatic change in the concept in recent years. Schools which were primarily responsible for the limited education of children between the ages of five and sixteen have now perceived an additional responsibility to provide for the educational needs of all community members. (Minzey, 1974: 7) In addition these community education oriented schools have addressed themselves to the problems of community development and community services. Community schools provide a catalytic and coordinating role in a community acknowledging a responsibility to identify and meet community needs effectively.

Segments of the community education concept have existed under other names. "Life Adjustment" education initiated by Dr. Charles Prosser in 1945 led to a White House Conference on the subject in 1947 and challenged each state to "equip all American youth so they could live democratically with satisfaction to themselves as as a profit to siciety." (Galen, 1950: 64).

The "Life Adjustment" Movement had its share of critics. Bestor (1952: 415) felt it an attempt to define education exclusively in terms of the needs of youth without reference to the capabilities of the school. Moore (1951: 111) stressed the need for teachers to overcome subject-mindedness and learn more about the student's interests, abilities, and future plans.

In a discussion by Allen and Rossman (1975: 34), life long learning should provide a new way of looking at community resources as well as the individuals comprising the community. However, the educational system must first accept this concept in its enriched dimensions of community involvement. Only then will the community respond in giving priority to providing resources for adult education without isolating it from education as a whole.

A conference on the Community School Concept and Classroom Teachers held in late 1974 signaled an endorsement of the concept and its potential to improve education. The teachers' concerns were classified into three general areas: 1. the practical aspects of community education; 2. lack of administrative support for their community education efforts, and 3. professional security. (Oregon, 1975: 3)

A study conducted in Arizona in 1958 revealed that the teachers, principals, superintendents and members of boards of education held in highest regard those beliefs on education identified as the community school position. (Jelinek, 1958: 18) More recently in an unpublished doctoral

dissertation Scott (1975: 117) found that PTA presidents, teachers, professors of education, principals, superintendents, legislators and school board presidents in Arizona endorse the philosophy of community education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this status study was to compare the attitudes toward community education concepts of teachers who have taken community education courses and those who have not. The t-test was used to analyze the data, and the methods used in this study, the statistical treatments, and the procedures use to collect are described in this chapter.

Population

The population consisted of all public school teachers teaching during the school year 1976-1977 who were currently or previously enrolled at Arizona State University. Some have taken community education courses offered by the University while others have not. Total numbers were not available.

Sample

Two groups were studied--teachers who have taken community education courses and teachers who have not. A random sample was taken for the first group from a list of names of teachers who had taken at least one community education course during the period from September 1975 through May 1976. From these enrollment lists forty-four names of teachers were randomly selected by using a random number table.

The second group of teachers who had not taken any community education courses was drawn from three intact graduate classes meeting during the Fall 1976 semester: Dr. Ralston's EDF 500, Dr. Helmstadter's EDP 454, and Dr. Wolftang's EDF 500. These classes were selected for their availability to the investigator. A total of thirty students were selected.

The first group responded to a mail-out questionnaire and forty-five percent were returned. Follow-up telephone calls were made resulting in an additional fourteen percent. The total response rate was fifty-two percent.

Development of the Instrument

A search was made for an instrument which would aid in the comparison of the attitudes of the two groups. An instrument designed and tested by Robert Lee Scoot for his Doctor of Education dissertation was modified somewhat and use by this investigator.

The technique developed by Murphy and Likert (1967: 120) for measuring attitudes was used in the preparation of this instrument. The scale, often referred to as the Likert scale, was a method of scoring whereby values of one to five were assigned to each of the five response positions. The instrument directed the participant to indicate his choice of the statement by placing a circle around one of the five response columns: SA (strongly agree); A (agree); U (undecided); D (disagree); and SD (strongly disagree).

Scott tested his instrument for validity and reliability prior to using it for his research. He discussed the questions with a panel of experts and made revisions until the face validity reached a point of general consensus. To establish content validity, the questionnaire was mailed to twenty-two Directors of Regional and Cooperating Centers for Community School Development for their analysis and comments.

Reliability was established by using a "split-half" method on the results of the test taken by ten people.

This investigator also confirmed the face validity of the instrument with a panel of experts. (Appendix A)

Data Collection

Data was collected for this research effort by administering the questionnaire to two groups of teachers. The researcher selected thirty students from three intact classes who were currently teaching in the public school system and who had never taken a community education course.

The students who had taken a community education course were selected by numbering all individuals from four enrollment lists and using a random number table. Course numbers EDA 538 and EDA 658 were used. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, the instrument and a self-addressed stamped envelope were mailed to forth-four of these studnets.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to present and interpret the results of the statistical techniques applied to the data. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part contains number and percentage of responses to the instrument. The second part explains the statistical processes involved in this study, while the third part analyzes the data.

RESPONSES TO THE INSTRUMENT

Data in Table 1 provide information relevant to the participants in the study. Teachers never having taken a community education course (Group A) responded with 100% return. This response rate was anticipated with intact classes. Teachers haveing taken a community education course (Group B) responded with a fifty-two percent return. Six questionnaires were returned unanswered or incomplete and were excluded from all calculations. One questionnaire was not delivered and subsequently reurned by the postal service. This was also deleted from the response calculations.contained in Table 1. Sixteen percent of Group A and fifty-five percent of Group B requested final results. (Table 2)

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents in this study were in the 20 to 35 age classification, twenty-seven percent were in the 36 to 50 age classification, while the remaining six percent were in the 51 and above classification (Table 3).

Ten percent had been teaching three years or less. Sixty-five percent had been teaching four to ten years, while twenty-five percent had taught for more than ten years (Table 4).

Forty-seven percent taught in a school with a community

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Instruments Returned by Groups

Population *	No. of Instruments Sent	No. of Instruments Returned	Percentage
Group A	30	30	100
Group B	44	23	52
TOTAL	74	53	

*Group A--Teachers never having taken a community education course

Group B--Teachers having taken one or more community education course.

Table 2

Number and Percentage of Respondents

Requesting Final Results

	Yes		No	
Group *	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
A	7	16	21	84
B	12	55	10	45
TOTAL	19	36	31	64

*Group A--Teachers never having taken a community education course.

Group B--Teachers having taken one or more community education courses.

Table 3

Number and Percentage of Respondents

by Age Classification

	20 to 35		36 to 50		Above 50	
Group*	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
A	25	89	3	11	0	0
B	10	45	11	47	1	5
TOTAL	35	67	14	29	1	4

* Group A--Teachers never having taken a community education course.

Group B--Teachers having taken one or more community education courses.

Table 4

Number and Percentage of Respondents

by Teaching Experience

	Below 3		4 to 10		Above 10	
Group*	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
A	5	18	21	75	2	7
B	0	0	12	40	10	45
TOTAL	5	18	33	56	12	26

*Group A--Teachers never having taken a community education course.

Group B--Teachers having taken one or more community education courses.

education program, fifty-one percent did not, and two percent did not answer the question (Table 5).

STATISTICAL PROCESSES

As the instruments were returned data were recorded. Each question was scored on the basis of a scoring continuum with a score of +5 for a strongly agree response to a score of +1 for a strongly disagree response. The totals for each group were averaged and group means and standard deviations were determined for each.

The method of data analysis applied in this research was the determiniation of the significance of differences between the sample means by conducting a t-test for independent means. This procedure was slected due to the small sample size, and .05 was chosen as the level of significance for testing the null hypothesis.

The t-test make three assumptions about the scores obtained in this research. The first assumption was that scores form an interval or ratio scale of measurement. The second was that scores in the populations under investigation were normally distributed. The third assumption held that score variances for the populations under study were equal.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA ANALYSIS

The null hypothesis stated that the attitudes of teachers toward the community education concept who had taken community education courses would not differ significantly from teachers who had never taken such a course.

The t-test for independent means showed that there were significant differences between the two groups with regard to their attitudes towrad the community education concept. The t-value was 13.88 and was signifanct at the .05 level of

Table 5

Number and Percentage of Respondents

with Community Education Program in School

	Yes		No	
Group*	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
A	7	16	21	84
B	12	55	10	45
TOTAL	19	36	31	64

*Group A--Teachers never having taken a community education course.

Group B--Teachers having taken one or more community education courses.

confidence. Using a Table of Percentage Points of the t-Distribution and using 49 degrees of freedom, this investigator found that P t 1.678 =.05 and P t -1.678 =.05. The probability of the attitudes of these two groups not being different will occur five percent of the time. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected due to the fact that there were significant differences among the attitudes of the teacher groups.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The acceptance of the community education concept has been slow to develop in Arizona. Since 1968 graduate level courses in community education have been offered through the Southwest Regional Center for Community Education Development at Arizona State University. However, the generation of a more favorable attitude toward the community education concept by these course had not been determined.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain if differences exist in the attitudes toward the community education concept of teachers who had never taken a community education course (Group A) and those who had (Group B). In order to accomplish this purpose, a null hypothesis was generated for testing.

Subjects from group A were selected from three intact graduate classes during the Fall 1976 term at Arizona State University. Subjects from Group B were randomly selected from enrollment lists of two community education courses, EDA 538 and EDA 591. These two groups were divided into three age classifications and three teaching experiential levels. They were also classified according to the existence of a community education program at their school.

A questionnaire, developed in Robert Scott's doctoral dissertation, was administered to all members of the sample. A scale similar to Likert's (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree) was used.

Collected and reduced data were processed by hand. Using the t-test for independent means, the null hypothesis was tested at the .05 level of significance and rejected.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the data collected and analyzed and assuming similar samples several conclusions were evidenced:

1. Teachers who have had a community education course support the community education concept more favorably than teachers who have not.

2. As a group, teachers between the ages of 20 to 35 years are less favorable than those over 36 years of age toward community education concepts.

3. As a group, teachers with four to ten years of teaching experience are less favorable toward community education concepts than teachers with over ten years experience.

4. As a group, teachers whose school had no on-going community education program were less favorable toward the community education concept that those teachers whose schools had such a program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and conclusions of this study elicited the following recommendations which are considered valid and germane to the issues under consideration and form the basis for further study:

1. For community education to flourish in Arizona it is incumbent upon community educators to convince younger teachers of the intrinsic merits of the community education concept. This can be accomplished through in-service workshops conducted by the Southwest Regional Center and/or the Arizona State Department of Education. Older teachers who are more supportive of the community education concept could further educate younger teachers.

2. Special seminars should be offered to principals

and school board members stressing the benefits of community education. They in turn, can support the concept with their teachers.

3. Individuals and groups supportive of the community education concept should become more manifest in their support thereby popularizing the concept.

4. The Department of Educational Administration at Arizona State University should emphasize the benefits of community education and the existence and purpose of the Southwest Regional Center to graduate students and others enrolled in educational administration classes as well as the general public.

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APPENDIX

November 3, 1976

Dear Colleague:

Your help is needed in a survey being conducted for my research methods class at Arizona State University. This project is concerned with determining and comparing attitudes toward the concept of community education of teachers who have and have not had community education courses. Results of this study will provide the Southwest Regional Center for Community Education Development with insight to aid them in the evaluation of their community education courses. This information will also provide me the data necessary to complete my research project.

Because you have completed at least one community education course and are a teacher in the public school system, your response will be most valuable to this study. Your name will not be used and all data will be used in a confidential manner.

Please complete the questionnaire and the information requested below as soon as possible and return it in the stamped self-addressed envelope enclosed.

Your cooperation in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Martha R. Almon

Martha R. Almon
Graduate Student,
Educational Administration

Questionnaires have been coded so that only the researcher will know the identity of the respondent. Your answers will remain confidential, but a copy of the composite results will be mailed to you if you requested in item 4 below. Please check the appropriate blanks.

1. To which age group do you belong?
   20 to 35_____ 36 to 50_____ Above 51_____

2. How many years have you been teaching?
   Less than 3_____ 4 to 10_____ Above 10_____

3. Does your school have a community education program?
   yes_____ no_____

4. Do you wish to receive the composite results of this study?
   yes_____ no_____

INSTRUCTIONS: The items included in this questionnaire are declarative statements concerning education. The purpose is to determine the attitudes toward the concept of community education of teachers: who have had or have n had community education courses.

Please indicate the position nearest your own belief or attitude about each of the following statements by circling the appropriate number. Space is provided for personal comments.

KEY: 5. Strongly agree (SA)-complete agreement with no reservations
4. Agree (A)-agreement with some reservation
3. Undecided (U)-cannot decidedly agree or disagree
2. Disagree (D)-disagreement to some extent
1. Strongly disagree (SD)-totally in disagreement

It is important for the school to:	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. have an impact on social progress through school and community participation and understanding on the part of most citizens.	5	4	3	2	1
2. have a citizens' advisory council made up of lay persons to assist in program development	5	4	3	2	1
3. use lay persons with proven skills as aides in appropriate areas	5	4	3	2	1
4. directly involve people who do not have children in the school program.	5	4	3	2	1
5. become involved in retraining programs for members of the community.	5	4	3	2	1
6. become involved in counseling programs for members of the community	5	4	3	2	1
7. act as information center to disperse information helpful in solving community related problems	5	4	3	2	1
8. solicit community members' concerns in the development of educational programs.	5	4	3	2	1
9. use adequate space found anywhere in the community for educational experiences.	5	4	3	2	1
10. provide available space to such outside agencies as Salvation Army, Big Brothers, County Health Service, etc. at minimal cost.	5	4	3	2	1

		SA	A	U	D	SD
11.	make available art rooms, craft rooms, and shops for community use.	5	4	3	2	1
12.	promote enrichment experiences for members of the community as well as school children.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	offer a broad program of literacy improvement for all ages.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	initiate projects for community improvement.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	help people through programs of retraining; learning how to prepare, purchase, and conserve food, clothing, and shelter.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	offer programs for members of the community to combat drugs, alcoholism, and veneral disease.	5	4	3	2	1
17.	offer cultural and aesthetic activities for members of the community.	5	4	3	2	1
18.	offer opportunities for all members of the family to learn together.	5	4	3	2	1
19.	adapt its curriculum to the needs of the local community it serves.	5	4	3	2	1
20.	provide a staff member to coordinate the optional programs with existing programs, community resources, and services.	5	4	3	2	1
21.	provide evening, weekend, and summer <u>educational</u> programs for youth.	5	4	3	2	1
22.	provide evening, weekend, and summer <u>recreational</u> programs for youth.	5	4	3	2	1
23.	provide evening, weekend, and summer <u>educational</u> programs for adults.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	provide evening, weekend, and summer <u>recreational</u> programs for adults.	5	4	3	2	1
25.	provide evening, weekend, and summer <u>educational</u> programs for elderly.	5	4	3	2	1
26.	provide evening, weekend, and summer <u>recreational</u> programs for elderly.	5	4	3	2	1

COMMENTS: